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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines current programs of reading/study skills instruction at two-year colleges. The paper is divided into three sections: a review of literature relating to the subject; analysis and evaluation of the research and programs surveyed; and implications for organizing and developing a reading improvement program. A bibliography is attached. The paper concludes that, since two-year colleges seem to be aware of the need for a reading/study skills program, many of these colleges will begin programs or expand and strengthen already existing programs. (Author/RL)

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A CRITICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON READING -  
STUDY SKILLS PROGRAMS IN TWO-YEAR COLLEGES  
AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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## I. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the current programs in the teaching of reading-study skills to two-year college students. A review of the related research is presented and critically evaluated. The paper is divided into three sections: (1) a review of the related literature on two-year college reading-study skills programs; (2) an analysis or evaluation of the research in terms of strengths and weaknesses of the programs surveyed; and (3) the implications of the study for organizing and developing a reading improvement program.

## II. State or Condition of Reading-Study Skills Programs in the Two-Year Colleges

There are relatively few four-year colleges today that have an organized, well-developed reading improvement program. This state of affairs is true also for the two-year college. A study by Bradshaw of all junior colleges in the state of Cali-

fornia revealed that out of 75, only 15 had a developmental program, five a remedial program and 34 a special reading program for low ability students as part of freshmen English.<sup>1</sup> The situation is much the same in most states. Roy Somerfeld in an article appearing in the Fourth Yearbook of the Southwest Reading Conference states clearly the prevailing attitude among many college educators: "On various college campuses many look with questioning, if not antagonism, toward student service programs in general and reading improvement programs in particular. These are the people who say college students should have learned to read before they get to the campus and if the students don't know how to read effectively, they have no business being in college."<sup>2</sup>

### III. Introduction to Research

To add a focus and simply to provide an organizational pattern to the numerous articles and books researched for this portion of the paper I shall first discuss reading programs offered by two-year colleges in terms of three broad areas: 1) programs emphasizing mechanical devices, 2) programs emphasizing books, and 3) programs emphasizing counselling policies. These guidelines are presented by Phillip Shaw in an article entitled "College Reading Improvement Programs of the Future."<sup>3</sup> This three area framework is also suggested by George D. Spache in the Fourth Yearbook of the National Reading Conference for College and Adults. In his essay "Trends in College Reading Programs"<sup>4</sup> he varies the heading only slightly from Shaw's: programs emphasizing machines, "skills-drills," and psychologically oriented guidance programs. Finally, Marjorie Ceerloffs and Martin Kling suggest machine oriented, book oriented and "others" as basic program divisions in their survey on "Current Practices in College

and Adult Developmental Reading Programs."<sup>5</sup> All three articles will be discussed more fully in the following pages and specific college programs will be cited to develop an understanding of how such approaches are put into practice.

The second aspect of the discussion will discuss reading programs that do not so easily fit into the three-area pattern. I found that certain reading-study skills programs emphasized other concerns. These concerns again are rather broad: 1) a multi-media approach, 2) a phonics approach, 3) critical reading as part of freshmen composition, and 4) an enrichment approach. A discussion of specific college programs will illustrate these various strategies.

#### A. Three Program Orientations

The broad three-area concerns that various two year colleges seem to adapt are either a machine, skills-drills (books), and/or psychological oriented approach. Charles Calvin suggests that these emphases developed in three phases: "Research necessary to establish reading programs came originally from the classrooms and laboratories of educational and experimental psychologists who emphasized the mechanical and perceptual aspects of reading. Programs stressing the mechanical and perceptual aspects of reading then proliferated. The next phase was the 'skills-drills' trend which emphasized study skills and certain types of formalized reading exercises. The last phase has manifested itself in programs seeking to identify and change behavioral patterns which are thought to be responsible for poor reading."<sup>6</sup>

Phillip Shaw analyzes in a bit more detail the above aspects and projects a trend for the programs of the future (after 1961).

Mechanical devices mentioned as most prevalent are the reading accelerator, tachistoscope and sets of films. Books (the basis for skills-drills) are viewed in three ways: students' regular texts, expository books about effective reading, and manuals of reading exercises. Counselling policies involve students meeting individually with psychologists and/or trained reading specialists in labs or in small groups in a classroom situation. The most recent trend related to this approach is the utilization of college students as tutors.

The direction that Shaw sees for the future is a "trend towards eclecticism"--the best of all three combined. Machines used for motivation; counselling principles and practices used as foundations of discussions and teaching; and, finally, textbooks and exercise manuals used as basic course materials.<sup>7</sup>

McDonald and Byrne in a brief article provide a fourth article to establish these three program phases.<sup>8</sup> What is especially interesting is that they cite Charles Colvin's 1959 doctoral dissertation which is a study of thirty-eight Pennsylvania colleges classified according to one of the programs. Following are the results:<sup>9</sup>

| <u>Program</u>                     | <u># of Schools</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Type I--Mechanistic                | 5                   | 13.2           |
| Type II--Skills-Drills             | 27                  | 71.0           |
| Type III--Psychologically-Oriented | 6                   | 15.8           |
| TOTAL                              | 38                  | 100.00         |

I grant that the results are probably outdated today but they provide an understanding in a limited sense of the background for recent trends.

While George Spache is probably the most well-known and articulate of the four writers mentioned, his writing deals more with the limitations of each approach than with a clarification of them. I

will discuss his views in the evaluation section of this paper. Marjorie Geerloffs and Martin Kling offer a helpful survey on "Current Practices in College and Adult Developmental Reading Programs" (April, 1968). This article will be discussed in some detail.

Answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What are the objectives for developmental reading programs in a broad sampling of colleges and reading clinics?
2. What are the typical materials and methods employed to meet the objectives expressed?
3. What does literature indicate in relation to the value of the objectives and the effectiveness of the materials and methods?<sup>10</sup>

A questionnaire was sent to 336 colleges, universities and reading clinics selected from directories such as the East Tennessee Press and Educational Developmental Laboratories. 336 questionnaires were sent to institutions in 47 states and 246 were returned. Of these, 210 offered reading improvement programs. The results are as follows.

| <u>Type of Program</u>                                                            | <u>Number of Schools</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Machine Oriented                                                                  | 23                       |
| Book Oriented                                                                     | 98                       |
| Machine and Book Oriented                                                         | 57                       |
| Neither Book nor Machine Oriented:<br>(oriented to students' individual<br>needs) | 20                       |
| 2 stated lecture                                                                  | 2                        |
| 3 locally prepared materials                                                      | 3                        |
| 6 did not reply                                                                   | 6                        |
| Total                                                                             | <u>210</u>               |

Objectives - 38 could not differentiate among the following choices. The remaining 172 rated the objectives as follows.

| <u>Skill</u>     | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>N.A.</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Rate          | 23       | 30       | 33       | 31       | 46       | 9        | 0           | 172          |
| 2. Comprehension | 75       | 59       | 19       | 15       | 2        | 2        | 0           | 172          |
| 3. Vocabulary    | 6        | 29       | 45       | 38       | 42       | 6        | 6           | 172          |
| 4. Flexibility   | 46       | 27       | 43       | 34       | 16       | 1        | 5           | 172          |
| 5. Study Skills  | 17       | 24       | 27       | 52       | 43       | 4        | 5           | 172          |
| 6. Other         | 5        | 3        | 4        | 1        | 10       | 38       | 111         | 172          |
| Total            | 172      | 172      | 171      | 171      | 159      | 60       | 127         |              |

Tests - Both pre- and post-tests are reported to be part of the reading program in 195 of the institutions. 6 standardized tests accounted for 83% of the tests mentioned by the respondents. They are as follows in order of frequency.

- |                                                    |                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Nelson-Denny                                    | 4. Iowa Silent Reading Test      |
| 2. Diagnostic Reading Test                         | 5. California Reading Test, 9-14 |
| 3. Cooperative English Test, Reading Comprehension | 6. Davis Reading Test            |

TABLE 2

Materials - 181 institutions reported the use of the 10 most frequently used Workbooks.

| <u>Author</u>                | <u>Book</u>                   | <u>Used Alone</u> | <u>Used with Other Books</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Science Research Association | Laboratories IIIA and IVA     | 5                 | 34                           |
| Brown, J.J.                  | Efficient Reading             | 7                 | 14                           |
| Simpson, E.                  | Better Reading Books          | 1                 | 17                           |
| Miller, L.                   | Increasing Reading Efficiency | 8                 | 10                           |
| Spache, G.,<br>Berg, P.      | The Art of Efficient Reading  | 3                 | 13                           |
| Gilbert, D.                  | Breaking the Reading Barrier  | 3                 | 13                           |
| Gilbert, D.                  | Power and Speed in Reading    | 2                 | 13                           |
| Strang, R.                   | Study Type Reading Exercises  | 3                 | 11                           |

|                        |                            |   |    |
|------------------------|----------------------------|---|----|
| Baker, W.D.            | Reading Skills             | 3 | 9  |
| Hill, W.,<br>Eller, W. | Power in Reading<br>Skills | 2 | 10 |

TABLE 3

Machines - 181 institutions reported the various use of machines.

| <u>Type of Machine</u>                                                                                    | <u>Used<br/>Alone</u> | <u>Used with<br/>Other Machines</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Tachistoscopes<br>Including Tach-x, Flash-x<br>Eye-span trainer                                           | 6                     | 115                                 |
| Directional Attack<br>Control Instruments<br>Educational Developmental<br>Laboratories, Controlled Reader | 13                    | 103                                 |
| Perceptoscope                                                                                             | 4                     | 14                                  |
| 16 mm films (not named)                                                                                   | 0                     | 21                                  |
| Harvard Reading Films                                                                                     | 5                     | 10                                  |
| C-B Educational Films                                                                                     | 0                     | 4                                   |
| Iowa University Reading Films                                                                             | 0                     | 3                                   |
| Accelerators                                                                                              |                       |                                     |
| AVR Rateometer                                                                                            | 2                     | 19                                  |
| SRA Accelerator                                                                                           | 8                     | 37                                  |
| Craig Reader                                                                                              | 0                     | 13                                  |
| Pacers (unspecified)                                                                                      | 4                     | 21                                  |
| Psychotechnics Shadowscope                                                                                | 1                     | 18                                  |
| EDL Skimmers                                                                                              | 0                     | 11                                  |

The implications in terms of evaluation will be discussed in the next section.

#### 1. Machine

This portion of the paper will provide a brief summary of various two-year colleges implementing the three reading-study skills approaches outlined thus far: machine, skills/drills, and counselling. Sanford Radner reports on a reading program at Staten Island Community College.<sup>12</sup> Students met for two and a half hours each week for 15 weeks. During each class half of the time was spent working on tachistoscopic training and paced reading of filmed articles. While

some time was spent on various reading techniques (skimming and scanning) and vocabulary development, the major emphasis was reading in achievement in terms of rate. Anna Lindberg reports in Junior College Journal<sup>13</sup> of a similar program in which students in the lowest ten percentile range on entrance tests were given a one-hour treatment twice a week using quotidian speed-comprehension techniques and machinery -- tachistoscope and pacers. These two articles reflect the general trend in machine oriented programs.

## 2. Skills-Drills

Programs emphasizing texts and workbook materials and a study skills-drills approach are interesting as they reflect more specific objectives (or lack of them) being sought within such programs. At Worcester Junior College, Miriam Schleik<sup>14</sup> outlines a skills approach requiring work in vocabulary development, word analysis, comprehension, skimming, scanning, SQ3R and precis writing. Of the many articles read in this area, Miss Schleik's program was the broadest in scope. Ralph Bradshaw discusses what is supposedly a well-developed reading improvement program at Riverside City College in Riverside, California, and suggests that the major part of class time is devoted to SQ3R and to the reading of a book every two weeks.<sup>15</sup> Reading for main ideas, supporting detail, vocabulary development and critical reading are some of the aims cultivated in the reading process. The several other articles read outlined programs that included a range of aims ranging from as few as one (SQ3R) to eight or nine as suggested by the Schleik reference.

## 3. Psychologically Oriented

In my research I found few programs that stressed primarily a counselling approach, while several colleges did include guidance

or counselling in some form. One interesting article was "Experimental Counseling/Reading Program" by Dorothy Klausner<sup>16</sup> describing a combined laboratory approach with six students meeting with a reading specialist and psychologist and also on an individual basis over a minimum of a twenty hour period. Work covered a wide range of reading and personal problems but on a completely individualized basis. Another intriguing report was a "Tutor Program at Harbor College."<sup>17</sup> Here reading tutors, recruited from the ranks of reading laboratory graduate students, were assigned five students each to help with scoring diagnoses, planning a program explaining lab procedures, scoring homework, discussing reading problems, evaluating pre- and post-tests and, in general, offering support and encouragement. The movement in the last three years has been to increase the involvement of not only graduate students but also college students in the role of tutors. Welch discusses college students effectively teaching both reading and writing skills in learning labs.<sup>18</sup> Also, Youhas presents a brief provocative study in which remedial reading courses were offered with college tutors responsible for certain sections and college professors for others.<sup>19</sup> The results indicated that there were no significant differences in reading growth in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension. Both groups showed similar patterns of improvement.

Very much a part of the "Psychologically Oriented" approach to reading programs is the current interest in individualized reading instruction. In the past several years a philosophy that a more personalized attitude towards reading instruction

would both motivate the student to improve and develop a more positive feeling towards reading has gradually provided a focus for attention. Consequently, several articles researched discuss reading programs at the two year college level that involve a variety of resource persons: undergraduate and graduate student tutors, college faculty from a variety of content areas, remedial reading specialists with both high school and two-year college teaching experience, counselors, and psychologists. A new emphasis on one-to-one instruction and frequent conferences seems to be replacing the concept of small group instruction. Learning labs are increasingly becoming an integral part of the community college support services to students.<sup>20</sup>

Henderson and Drummond each present an article with a research base that offers some interesting information related to a personalized versus a prescriptive model of individualizing reading instruction.

Henderson conducted a study of three community/junior college reading programs in Oklahoma to determine reading gains based upon two models:<sup>22</sup>

1. A "Personalized Technique" relying on Cognitive Field Theory which incorporated the use of counselors, tutors, and instructors with frequent conferences  
and
2. A "Prescriptive Technique" relying on Behavioristic Learning Theory which emphasized learning guides, skills-drills materials, and machines with little interaction with a teacher.

Component sub-skills to be learned were rate, vocabulary and comprehension. Sixty-two students were enrolled in eight classes: four for each model. The expected results were that students in the "Personalized" model would achieve more. The opposite was the case. Students learning in the classes using the "Prescriptive" model made greater growth. Reading interest increased for students in both groups regardless of the model. The research base for this study is limited, but the findings suggest that work on this topic is well in order.

Drummond studied thirty freshmen at Bangor Community College in Maine.<sup>23</sup> Using the "Internal-External Scale" (Rotter, 1966), Drummond establishes two types of learners:

1. "Internal"--a person who believes that reinforcement is contingent upon his own behavior  
and
2. "External"--a person who believes reinforcement is contingent upon chance, fate or other people.

The thirty freshmen were assigned an individualized reading program after diagnostic evaluation of reading skills.

The model was a prescriptive one: self-instructional texts, reading kits, controlled readers, and skimming-scanning machines were the materials utilized. Students turned in weekly logs of progress to the instructor. Classes met for three hours a week for twelve weeks but there were no group activities within the classroom. The results of Drummond's study found that the external-oriented students

achieved more than the internal-oriented students in reading improvement.

The two studies clearly suggest that students learn in different ways and at different rates and in response to different teaching methods and materials. True individualization must consider these factors.

It is to be understood that many schools offer programs that provide any combination of the three areas discussed. The review of research presented here is an attempt to make more concrete the way a few colleges have reflected each of the three major areas as they have been emphasized predominantly or entirely.

#### B. Other Program Concerns

Finally, I shall present a few types of reading programs that do not fit clearly into any of the approaches discussed thus far: (1) an emphasis on multi-media; (2) phonics; (3) critical reading as a part of freshmen English; and (4) enrichment. Certain college reading programs were concerned with remedial reading problems but approached the correction of these problems by providing devices to motivate the student to work on correcting them himself. A carefully detailed description of a program of lessons presented with tapes, films and filmstrips is presented by Jon M. Hagstrom in the article "A Multi-Media Self-Instructional Systems Approach to Word Study and Vocabulary Enrichment."<sup>24</sup> Other programs provided motivation with phonographs

tape recorders, television, computers and even the telephone.

Phonics is another concern some reading programs stress. Grace Brown states that "...without knowledge (and also a consistent application) of the decoding system of phonic analysis, accurate reading is not possible..."<sup>25</sup> In the article "Teaching College Phonics at American River College," Barbara Oakman argues that there is little research on teaching at the college level and suggests that we must accept the need for phonics instruction on a college level, that it should be treated as a "review" and that we "make every effort to incorporate words which are not in the student's reading vocabulary into the lessons so that the student will be expanding his vocabulary at the same time that he is learning the phonetic principles of his language."<sup>26</sup>

Critical reading as part of freshmen English in some colleges attempts to deal with the "reading problem." The tendency is to assign literature at frequent intervals and to carefully guide classroom discussion rather than the actual reading. Sister Mary Emmanuel encouraged her young ladies at Gwynedd-Mercy Junior College to read "creatively."<sup>27</sup> She approached composition in a workshop fashion encouraging students to analyze and then to imitate the author's style in their own writing. Sister Emmanuel encouraged the girls to publish in the campus literary magazine and to enter writing contests. The emphasis on creative writing was supposed to help to develop creative reading. Ada Hatch<sup>28</sup> reports on attempting to improve reading comprehension and critical reading by assigning high interest literature (James Thurber, Tennessee Williams, Steinbeck) and then by asking

students to keep a record of each work read by simply writing a simple sentence statement of the theme. The latter is seen as a "gauge to reading ability." Again these are just samplings of approaches to reading within freshmen English.

Simply to develop a positive attitude towards reading and to encourage reading for appreciation and pleasure is the primary goal and makes up the "reading program" philosophy of many two year colleges. Brough reports on "A Reading Program for Freshmen" at Eastern New Mexico Junior College.<sup>29</sup> The article is noteworthy for it suggests what a small southwestern junior college with limited finances and resources viewed simply "appreciation" as a possible alternative to a more comprehensive, balanced reading program. Each freshman in a sense "contracts" to read 12 assignments which may consists of fiction, non-fiction books, magazine articles, etc. He then discusses his reading in open-ended discussions with other students and instructor in the classroom. In addition to this, the student has a conference with the school's librarian in which he turns in an index card with his name, the name of the author and work read and a brief statement of his reaction to the reading. No written reports or evaluations are required. It was decided that "...the latter tends to kill interest." The librarian then records a "+" to indicate definite enthusiasm and growth, "0" to indicate very moderate interest and no appreciable growth, and "-" to indicate that the reading experience has been unsatisfactory. Similar approaches were outlined by authors of other articles.<sup>30</sup> A rather amusing account of an attempt to encourage reading was to offer to a student a free dinner with a faculty member for each time or more books of "acceptable quality" were read. What I found even more amusing was that the offer produced only 3% student participation.<sup>31</sup>

The research in this paper comprises a broad, varied sampling of

many articles and several books on two-year college reading and study skills programs. Many more articles were read and skimmed that provided only slight variation on what has been discussed. Once again I want to emphasize that I have chosen as areas of concern those that were most frequently discussed by articles and books on the topic and that the specific references cited in this paper seemed to me the most representative of the data I read and the most illustrative to support my generalizations.

#### IV. Evaluation

This section of the paper seeks to evaluate the reading-study skills approaches and programs discussed in the body of this report. The first portion of the evaluation will deal with the three orientations that I have suggested many two-year college reading-study skills programs follow: machine, skills-drills, and counselling. First let me establish some principles supporting a machine-oriented program. Spache puts it this way: "The apparent philosophy underlying reading programs depending largely on mechanical devices is that reading is basically a mechanical act in which a group of rather unrelated skills such as rate, comprehension and vocabulary are also involved. Assumptions inherent in this philosophy are the interpretation of eye-movement studies as indicating that these behaviors are the essence of reading and can be modified by eye-movement training with consequent improvement certainly of rate in reading and, possibly, of comprehension ... a further assumption is that training in any one of the skills is reflected in general improvement of reading in all types of situations."<sup>32</sup>

There are several weaknesses in these premises. First is that reading is not merely a "mechanical act": it is also a thinking

process. It is in the area of a definition of reading that the machine approach to reading falls short. Not only does the orientation ignore the complex process of thinking that reading involves but it also neglects to consider such factors as purpose, attitude, language skills, past experience, conceptual background, knowledge, intelligence, personality, neurological, physiological and psychological factors. In essence, the machine orientation does not view reading as the complex process it is.

The eye-movement training, stress on rate, and assumption of transfer of learning are other weaknesses to be considered. Research on eye-movement training suggests that there is little reason to believe that irregular eye-movement causes poor reading and that mechanical training to eliminate regressions and to decrease number and length of fixations may not contribute significantly to improved reading. The emphasis on rate is also of no real value. Again studies suggest that speed in itself is not so important, but rather what is important is how rate is tied to comprehension or understanding and to knowing how to adjust speed depending upon the difficulty of the material and the purposes for reading them. Finally, the idea of transfer of learning from one reading skill to another is simply not a valid idea. It would be nice and simple if it were.

In light of this criticism it is significant that of the studies discussed in this paper those by McDonald and Byrne and Geerloffs and Kling suggest that only a small percentage of two-year colleges are geared entirely towards mechanical devices to improve reading: 13.2% in the 1950 Pennsylvania study and 9.13% in the 1968 nation-wide study. Apparently the weaknesses have been considered by two-year college reading specialists. However, when allowing for

on objectives, methods and materials were all absent to a great degree.

The main problem with the counselling-guidance approach was that such a program was never fully developed. Such a program, Spache argues, is never really feasible because of the great expense and the limited availability of highly trained professional personnel. He suggests that a clinical program would need on the staff a psychiatrist, psychologist, medical doctor,\* oculist and several reading specialists. Ideally, this may be the case. The programs I read about often had one or two of these trained professionals but even then the roles and responsibilities were never clearly defined. Often, ill-equipped to do so, a graduate student in reading, an experienced reading specialist and a psychologist performed synonymous or overlapping functions. The value of the counselling approach is that it does view reading as more of a complex process involving personality, attitude, environment, psychological, neurological and physiological factors.

Finally, the "other" approaches suffered from more specific weaknesses. The emphasis on critical reading in freshmen English is a poor substitute for a reading improvement program. The methods and techniques used to develop critical reading by a teacher highly trained in literature is far different from a reading specialist: the literature teacher "does not teach a reading skill for its own sake, as does the reading teacher. He concerns himself not with the sequential development of reading skills, but with the sequential development of ideas. Skills are developed functionally, not directly. The skills taught are determined by the content of the material assigned for a given lesson, never the reverse."<sup>3</sup> One can

clearly see that such instruction has limited value in terms of more general reading problems and of more specific reading problems in various content areas. Also, freshmen English instructors are often more interested in writing and discussion rather than in reading skills and thus careful guidance often goes into the former at the expense of the latter.

The multi-media approach is fine for motivational purposes as is the "appreciation and pleasure" approaches of Brough and others. The question that is avoided is "what happens when the student starts reading with an enthusiastic, positive attitude and then encounters reading problems?" The assumption appears to be that there won't be any difficulties. The emphasis on phonics I think is clear. It is simply too limited an approach — the value of which for a college student is questionable. The ultimate value, I feel, of each concern is that it is an attempt to do something, however limited, rather than settling for nothing.

#### V. Suggestions for Improvement

The implications of the survey and evaluation of reading/study-skills programs in the two-year college presented in this paper are clearly related and will be presented in a loosely sequential manner: first is the need of an awareness of the necessity of a well-planned, well-organized, well-developed balanced reading and study-skills program. The next step would be the formulation of a philosophy of reading, then a definition and, finally, objectives and more specific aims for the program. The following elaboration of my views on these areas are to be seen as an attempt to delineate some rather "ideal" guidelines for a reading improvement program.

Why a reading/study-skills program at the two-year college level? Marksheffel outlines some research that ought to impress college educators who feel students should know how to read before they enter college and if they don't, that they shouldn't be in college. I feel a major obstacle exists in the two-year college today that halts full-development of reading/study-skills programs — that obstacle is lack of awareness of the need. The following are some points that Marksheffel makes:

1. The mentally superior students in the secondary schools and colleges are among the most seriously retarded readers.
2. There is a difference of at least 6 to 9 grade levels in the reading ability of secondary students in almost every classroom in America. At times the range of difference between the best and poorest readers in a class will be as great as 12 to 14 grade levels.
3. Approximately 15 per cent of America's adults are functionally illiterate. An additional 15 per cent of the adults read and write at or below the sixth-grade level. Only half of America's adults read and write better than the average eighth-grader.
4. An alarming number of college freshmen lack the reading skills necessary for learning at the college level. One study revealed that more than two-thirds of the freshmen who were completing their first year of college had never been taught how to concentrate on reading, how best to read a chapter in a book, or how to read critically. Sixty-four per cent of these students stated that they had never been taught to develop an awareness of problems when reading.
5. For the past eight years Marksheffel has given the diagnostic reading test to all prospective secondary teachers enrolled in Methods of Secondary Reading at the Oregon State University. When scores of these upper-classmen and graduate students were compared

with reading norms for college freshmen, they ranged from the 1st to the 99th percentile.<sup>34</sup> Numerous other studies also show that there is a critical need for the continued instruction of reading at the secondary and college levels. Educators such as Rita Sullivan as recently as December, 1975 are still attempting to make colleges "aware" of the need for reading and study skills programs: her plea is that "Today the four year college, junior, community and the university must all be concerned with the needs of a more varied student body."<sup>35</sup> Her thesis is primarily that college educators are not dealing with the need for comprehensive, fully-developed reading-study skills programs.

I suggested in the evaluation section of the paper that two-year college reading programs lacked clear, broad, in-depth objectives. A major reason for this is the lack of a "philosophy." Since research documents the evidence of severe reading problems existing at all levels of the educational ladder, it seems logical that a philosophy of reading should view reading as developmental: instruction in all areas of reading should be offered to all students who could benefit at all educational levels. Implicit is the principle that reading "...does not differ in kind at any particular level of instruction but only in degree according to the reader's level of motivation and experience."<sup>36</sup> In order to meet the varying interests, needs and abilities of students, a college reading program needs to allow for remedial, development, advanced and even more specialized work in reading to handle such learners as the handicapped and retarded. The scope of such a program will be discussed under "Objectives."

Closely related to the philosophy underlying a reading program is the definition. Too many educators for too long a time viewed reading as a simple mechanical process involving word recognition and pronunciation, and emphasizing eye-movement. I have discussed, this latter assumption as the premise behind two-year college reading

programs that stressed a machine approach. Again, I shall point out that reading is a complex, active process involving such factors as purpose, attitude, personality, language skills, knowledge, intelligence, past experience, conceptual background, and neurological, physiological and psychological concerns. The active process of reading involves thinking and reasoning and reacting. The importance of such a definition is the attempt to get away from simplistic solutions that name a few or even a single factor as a reason for a reading problem rather than a spectrum of reasons. Another reason is to reinforce the idea that reading ought to be an individual, independent procedure. The student-reader has all too often been viewed as a passive reader guided in his reading by the teacher.

Finally, objectives and more specific aims must grow out of a philosophy and definition of reading. Following are some suggested guidelines. These are by no means "the" goals or objectives to follow. They are simply views provided to indicate a more comprehensive framework than research on any two-year college program provided.

#### Guidelines for Objectives

1. Offer to all students reading instruction that fits with their interests, needs, and abilities in order to help the student become a mature, active, independent reader.
2. Provide for a broad definition of reading.
3. Provide for a diagnostic testing program to aid in assessing needs.
4. Provide a well-balanced reading program that includes all three orientations suggested in the survey section of the paper: machines, skills-drills and counselling rather than an emphasis on

any one. A well-balanced program should consider the following areas as "Guidelines for More Specific Aims."

- a. Develop meaning and concept background.
- b. Develop vocabulary.
- c. Develop word analysis skills.
- d. Develop organizational skills.
- e. Develop critical reading skills.
- f. Develop flexibility and rate of comprehension.
- g. Develop research skills (e.g., dictionary, encyclopedia, indexes, card catalogue) in order to teach how to learn: how to find out what one doesn't know and how to gain that missing knowledge or understanding.
5. Individualize methods and materials:
  - a. Methods should be based upon an understanding of the personality and psychology of the learner.
  - b. Materials should be multi-level in difficulty, interesting and varied in content.
6. Encourage a positive, funful, loving attitude towards reading.

The writer suggests that all objectives and aims growing out of these guidelines be implemented in an environment of encouragement, concern, understanding and patience.

## VI. Summary and Conclusion

This study is by no means comprehensive. The number of articles, annual proceedings and yearbooks on the topic of "Two-Year College Reading/Study-Skills Programs" are impressive. And yet all too few writings attempt to look at some recent and current trends and to

evaluate them in terms of some well-considered criteria. I hope that in this sense my paper serves as a broader, more critical focus in the research.

While many of the specific college programs surveyed did not provide a comprehensive reading-study skills program and, in many instances, was so limited in scope as to suggest minimal value to a student, I still feel encouraged by the awareness of the need for some kind of program no matter how limited. I believe that many two-year colleges will begin or expand, refine and strengthen their already existing programs on a widening base as funds and further research in reading is brought to college educators' attention. The key is continued and further "awareness" of the need.

Footnotes

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3. Phillip Shaw, "College Reading Improvement Programs of the Future," International Reading Association, VI (1961), pp. 48-49.
4. George D. Spache, "Trends in College Reading Programs," Fourth Yearbook of the Southwest Reading Conference (1955), p. 43.
5. Marjorie Geerloffs and Martin Kling, "Current Practices in College and Adult Developmental Reading Programs," Journal of Reading, XI (April, 1968), pp. 517-520+.
6. Charles R. Calvin, "Objectives and Emphases in College Reading Programs," College Reading Association Proceedings, IV-VII (1963-66), p. 23.
7. Phillip Shaw, op. cit., p. 49.
8. Arthur S. McDonald and James A. Byrne, "Four Questions on Objectives," Journal of Developmental Reading, V, Pt. I, No. 3 (Spring, 1958), pp. 46-51.
9. Ibid., p. 48.
10. Geerloffs, op. cit., p. 518.
11. Ibid., pp. 569-570. (Table 2, p 569 and Table 3, p 570)
12. Sanford Radner, "The Community College Reading Program," Junior College Journal, XXX (March, 1960), pp. 379-80.
13. Anna E. Lindberg, "Developmental Reading," Junior College Journal, XXVII (April, 1957), p. 469.
14. Miriam Schleik, "A Junior College Reading Program," Junior College Journal, XXI (October, 1950), pp. 97-105.
15. Ralph Bradshaw, op. cit., p. 182.
16. Dorothy Klausner, "Experimental Counseling/Reading Program," Western College Reading Association Newsletter, 3 (Summer, 1970), p. 1.
17. \_\_\_\_\_, "Tutor Program at Harbor College," Western College Reading Association Newsletter, 1 (June, 1968), p. 2.

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22. Mary Ann Henderson, "Individualized Reading Instruction in Two-Year Colleges," Journal of Reading, 19 (March, 1976), pp. 464-71.
23. R.J. Drummond, et al. "Internal-External Control Construct and Performance in an Individualized Community College Reading Course," Reading Improvement, 12 (Spring 1975), pp. 34-38.
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27. Sister Mary Emmanuel, "College English for Freshmen," Junior College Journal, XXIII (April, 1953), pp. 451-56.
28. Ada Hatch, "Reading Centered Composition Course," Junior College Journal, XXVI (March, 1956), 395-99.
29. Kenneth J. Brough, "A Reading Program for Freshmen," Junior College Journal, X (September, 1939), pp. 16-20.
30. James A. Bond, "Freshmen Reading Program in Junior College," Junior College Journal, XI (September, 1940), pp. 22-25.

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33. Harold L. Herber, Teaching Reading in the Content Areas (Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 10.
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35. Rita J. Sullivan, "Learning Disabilities in College: The University Role," Journal of Reading, 19 (October, 1975), pp. 6-7.
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